



Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair Stations

MAY 1998

In order to increase consumer protection and help consumers identify shops providing the highest quality vehicle emissions repairs, the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR), at the direction of the state Legislature, has created the Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair program. Gold Shield stations are licensed Smog Check test-and-repair stations that meet high performance standards and are certified by the state to guarantee their emissions-related repairs on Gross Polluters, the small percentage of vehicles that pollute the most.

Inadequate Repairs Cost the Consumer. Many vehicles that fail their Smog Check at Gross Polluter levels are not adequately repaired and require further repairs. Since a Gross Polluter must be repaired at a test-and-repair facility and certified at a separate Test-Only Station, inadequate repairs can cause these vehicles to go back and forth, or "ping-pong," between these different facilities.

Gross Polluter Certification Pilot Stations. Since December 1997, a pilot program has been testing the effectiveness of repairing and certifying Gross Polluters at Gold Shield stations. The pilot allows approximately 100 Gold Shield stations statewide to certify the repairs they make on Gross Polluters without having to send them to Test-Only Stations for this service.

Help for the Consumer. The Gold Shield program combats "ping-ponging" by helping consumers identify Smog Check stations that guarantee Gross Polluters will be repaired right the first time or further repairs will be made at no cost.

The Consumer's Responsibility. When a Gross Polluter is brought into a Gold Shield station, the technician examines the vehicle and recommends necessary emissions-related repairs. If the vehicle owner does not agree to have these repairs made, the station will not be held responsible for any additional repairs that may be needed to certify the vehicle and bring it into compliance with state vehicle emissions requirements.

Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair Station Criteria. A Gold Shield station must:

- have no violations against its Automotive Repair Dealer registration or its Smog Check Station license;
- maintain a "ping-pong" rate of 5 percent or less;
- submit to periodic performance inspections and monitoring; and
- guarantee that the gross-polluting vehicles it repairs will pass their Smog Check at a Test-Only Station within 10 days or 1,000 miles, whichever comes first, or additional repairs will be made at no extra charge.

Additionally, some stations may opt to guarantee their repairs for longer periods or more miles.

Monitoring. Gold Shield stations will be monitored through the use of data collected by the state Vehicle Information Database (VID), which gathers information from the Electronic Transmission (ET) system installed in each Smog Check machine. Quarterly reports from the VID will determine if a station's performance meets Gold Shield criteria. Additionally, any violations against a station's Automotive Repair Dealer registration or Smog Check station license is cause for revoking its Gold Shield certification.

Low Income Repair Assistance Program (LIRAP). If a low income motorist cannot afford emissions-related repairs, he or she may be eligible to participate in the LIRAP. LIRAP may pay up to \$450 for emissions-related repairs to qualified motorists. Motorists must make a \$250 co-pay and have the repairs performed at a participating Gold Shield station.

Clean Air Benefits. Under the Gold Shield program, more effective repairs will not only save consumers time and money but also produce cleaner, better running vehicles. And this helps California meet its clean air goals allowing all Californians to breathe a little easier.

*"Fix it
Right the
First Time,
Every
Time."*